

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USLO RIYADH 0147

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: OVIP (CODEL STONE)
SUBJECT: SENATOR STONE'S DISCUSSIONS IN RIYADH

1. SUMMARY AND OUTLINE: SENATOR RICHARD STONE (D-FLA), CHAIRMAN OF THE NEAR EAST/SOUTH ASIA SUB-COMMITTEE OF SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, SPENT SUCCESSFUL TWO-DAY VISIT IN RIYADH. DURING VISIT HE HAD AUDIENCE WITH KING KHALID, A MEETING WITH PRINCE ABDULLAH, LUNCH WITH MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND ELECTRICITY AL-GOSSAIBI, AND DINNER WITH MINISTER OF PETROLEUM ZAKI YAMANI. SENIOR OFFICIALS URGED USG VIGOROUSLY AND RAPIDLY TO PURSUE ITS PEACE EFFORTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. PRINCE ABDULLAH BELIEVED TIME WAS A VITAL FACTOR AND USG SHOULD IF NECESSARY ACT UNILATERALLY TO IMPOSE A SOLUTION. SENATOR REPEATEDLY EXPLAINED USG COULD NOT IMPOSE A SOLUTION AND THAT NONE LIKELY TO BE FINALLY REACHED IN 1977 OUT OF CURRENT PEACE EFFORTS. AFTER HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH ALL NEW LIKUD BLZCK LEADDCS, HOWEVER, HE FIRMLY BELIEVED ARABS WOULD FIND ROOM FOR DISCUSSION AND NEGOTIATION WITH THEM. CONFIDENTIAL

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TO YAMANI AND AL GOSSAIBI HE URGED THAT ARABS NOT SET DEADLINES FOR THEMSELVES; THEY SHOULD NOT OVERREACT TO ANY INITIAL REMARKS LIKUD MIGHT MAKE AFTER IT HAD JUST ASSUMED OFFICE. WITH A MODICUM OF PATIENCE, SENATOR WAS CONFIDENT A PROCESS OF NEGOTIATION COULD BEGIN THAT WOULD PERMIT SOLID, GRADUAL PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE IN THE YEAR OR TWO AHEAD. END SUMMARY.

2. SENATOR'S MEETING WITH SECOND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PRINCE ABDULLAH BIN ABDUL AZIZ: SENATOR STONE MET FOR ALMOST ONE

HOUR ON JUNE 7TH WITH PRINCE ABDULLAH BIN ABDUL AZIZ AND WITH THE DEPUTY COMMANDANT OF THE NATIONAL GUARD, SHEIKH IBRAHIM TWEIJRI. AFTER AN INITIAL EXCHANGE OF COURTESIES, PRINCE ABDULLAH EXPRESSED KEEN INTEREST IN SENATOR STONE'S MIDDLE-EASTERN TRIP, AND PARTICULARLY -- IN VIEW OF THE SENATOR'S TRIP TO ISRAEL -- IN WHETHER CHANCES FOR PEACE WERE BETTER OR WORSE AFTER THE VICTORY OF THE LIKUD BLOCK IN ISRAEL'S LAST ELECTION.

3. THE SENATOR TOLD PRINCE ABDULLAH THAT IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO REGARD PEACE AS AN IMPOSSIBILITY BECAUSE OF THE STATEMENTS THAT LIKUD LEADERS MAY HAVE MADE BEFORE OR EVEN AFTER THE ELECTION. HE PARTICULARLY COMMENDED THE JUDGEMENT PRINCE FAHD HAD SHOWN WHEN ASKED RECENTLY BY A MEMBER OF THE SENATE ABOUT THE IMPACT OF SOME OF MENAHEM BEGIN'S STATEMENTS ON PROSPECTS FOR PEACE. PRINCE FAHD HAD SAID THAT ONE SHOULD SUSPEND JUDGEMENT ON A STATESMAN UNTIL HE HAS ASSUMED OFFICE AND HAS ESTABLISHED A RECORD OF PUBLIC ACTION. ANY OTHER COMMENTS, PRINCE FAHD BELIEVED, WOULD BE PREMATURE.

4. SENATOR STONE SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN IMPRESSED BY THE WISDOM OF PRINCE FAHD'S ANSWER AT THE TIME. FOLLOWING HIS OWN VISIT TO ISRAEL, AND HIS DISCUSSION WITH ALL OF THE LIKUD BLOC LEADERS, HE WAS EVEN MORE IMPRESSED BY PRINCE FAHD'S WISDOM. WHILE IN ISRAEL, THE SENATOR SAID THAT HE HAD SEEN MENAHEM BEGIN TWICE, EZER WEISSMAN TWICE, THE
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LIKUD FACTION LEADER EHRLICH ONE, YIGAL YADIN ONCE, AND HAD HAD A LONG TALK WITH MOSHE DAYAN. HE CONCLUDED THAT ISRAEL'S NEW LEADERSHIP WAS STRONG, VIGOROUS, SELF-CONFIDENT. THEIR ENTHUSIASM AND DYNAMISM WAS A CLEAR CONTRAST WITH THE FATIGUE, THE ARM-WEARINESS, OF THE ALIGNMENT BLOC OF POLITICIANS. THE SENATOR DID NOT SEE THE NEW LEADERSHIP AS RIGID OR INFLEXIBLE. THEY HAD ALREADY SAID PUBLICLY THAT THEY WOULD BE WILLING TO MAKE TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS WITH REGARD TO SIANI AND THE GOLAN. LESS HAS BEEN SAID ABOUT THE WEST BANK, BUT SENATOR STONE BELIEVED THAT IF MOSHE DAYAN IN PARTICULAR BECAME FOREIGN MINISTER, THERE UNQUESTIONABLY WOULD BE THE POSSIBILITY OF PROGRESS ON ALL OUTSTANDING ISSUES BETWEEN THE ARABS AND ISRAELIS. THE SENATOR BELIEVED THAT DAYAN WOULD BE CAPABLE OF PURSUING A POLICY OF QUIET, PRACTICAL, AND SUBSTANTIAL ACCOMMODATIONS WITH THE ARAB SIDE.

5. PRINCE ABDULLAH WAS ENCOURAGED TO HEAR THIS. HE SAID IT WAS OF THE GREATEST MOMENT THAT THE UNITED STATES PRESSED FORWARD TO BRING ABOUT SOON A PEACE SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THE PRESENT MOMENT WAS THE MOST AUSPICIOUS IN THE HISTORY OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT FOR THIS CONFLICT TO COME TO AN END. THERE WAS A CONSENSUS AMONG THE ARAB PRINCIPALS THAT A SETTLEMENT SHOULD BE REACHED THAT ACKNOWLEDGE

LEDGED ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST, AND THAT PROVIDED JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS ALSO FOR THE ARAB SIDE. ABDULLAH REPEATED THAT A SETTLEMENT SHOULD BE REACHED EXPEDITIOUSLY. NOT ALL THE ARAB LEADERS NOR ALL ELEMENTS IN THE ARAB WORLD WERE WELL DISPOSED TO PEACE EFFORTS. IN THE U.S. DELAYED, THE PRESENT RESPONSIBLE ARAB LEADERSHIP MIGHT BE CHANGED FOR A LESS MODERATE ONE, AND THE RESULT COULD BE DAMAGING TO THE INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES, THE ARABS, AND ISRAEL ALIKE. PRINCE ABDULLAH THEREFORE URGED THAT THE UNITED STATES SEEK TO BRING ABOUT A RAPID, FINAL RADICAL SOLUTION TO THE ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE. IT SHOULD TRY TO DO SO THIS YEAR, AND IF NECESSARY, THE UNITED
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STATES SHOULD BE PREPARED TO IMPOSE A SOLUTION.

6. SENATOR STONE AGREED THAT THE PRESENT TIME WAS OPPORTUNE FOR MOVES TOWARD A SETTLEMENT. HE DID NOT, HOWEVER, THINK THAT A SETTLEMENT COULD BE REACHED AT A STROKE, NOR PERHPAS FULLY ACCOMPLISHED IN 1977, OR 1978, OR EVEN 1979;. HE THOUGHT IT WAS IMPORTANT NEVERTHELESS TO BEGIN A PROCESS OF DISCUSSIONS, ACCOMMODATIONS, AND EXPLORATIONS. SUCH A PROCESS COULD LEAD TO BENEFICIAL RESULTS, SOME GREAT, AND SOME SMALL. MOMENTUM TOWARD A SETTLEMENT WOULD THUS BE BUILT UP, THAT WOULD PROVIDE HOPE AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO EACH ARAB LEADER. THE SENATOR AFFIRMED AGAIN, THAT AFTER HIS DISCUSSIONS IN ISRAEL, HE WAS CONVINCED THAT AN OPPORTUNITY EXISTED FOR ARABS AND ISRAELIS TO WORK CONSTRUCTIVELY TO SOLVE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEM.

7. PRINCE ABDULLAH WELCOMED THE SENATOR'S CONCLUSIONS. HE STILL HOPED THE UNITED STATES WOULD INCREASE ITS EFFORTS QUICKLY TO ACHIEVE A SOLUTION. FRANKLY, HE SAID, THERE WERE QUESTIONS IN THE MINDS OF SOME ARAB LEADERS AS TO DETERMINATION AND CONSTANCY WITH WHICH THE UNITED STATES COULD PURSUE A DIFFICULT FOREIGN POLICY GOAL. HE NOTED THAT AT THE PRESENT TIME, USSR CONTINUED TO LABOR ON BEHALF OF ITS FRIENDS AND CLIENTS IN THE AREA AND ELSEWHERE. THE SENATOR BELIEVED PRINCE ABDULLAH WOULD NOT BE DISAPPOINTED WITH PRESIDENT CARTER'S DETERMINATION TO WORK SUCCESSFULLY TO BRING PEACE TO THE MIDDLE EAST.

8. AUDIENCE WITH KING KHALID: THE SENATOR NEXT MET FOR ONE HOUR WITH KING KHALID BIN ADBUL AZIZ AT THE MA'ZAR PALACE. ALSO PRESENT WAS ROYAL COUNSELOR RASHID PHARONE, AND MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AHMAD ZAKI YAMANI; PRINCE ABDULLAH JOINED THE AUDIENCE AFTER THE FIRST QUARTER HOUR. AFTER INITIAL AMENITIES, KING KHALID SAID HE HOPED THE UNITED STATES WOULD CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS TO HELP SETTLE
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OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS IN AFRICA, ASIA, AND THE MIDDLE EAST. SUCH EFFORTS SHOULD ESPECIALLY BE MADE IN THE MIDDLE EAST BECAUSE OF THE CONTINUED, ACTIVE THREAT THE AREA FACED FROM COMMUNISM AND THE USSR. THE RUSSIANS WERE NOT ACTIVE IN ETHIOPIA AND RED SEA REGION. THERE, THEY WERE WORKING WITH LEFTIST ELEMENTS AND HAD THE SUPPORT ALSO OF AN AIR BRIDGE FROM LIBYA. RUSSIANS LIKEWISE HAD BEEN A SERIOUS THREAT TO EGYPT AND THE SUDAN. EVEN IN ISRAEL, THE USSR WAS MAINTAINING A POSITION OF STRENGTH VIA ITS CONTROL OVER THE EXIT RIGHTS OF LARGE NUMBERS OF JEWISH IMMIGRANTS.

9. SENATOR STONE ASSURED HIS MAJESTY THAT HE SAW EYE TO EYE WITH HIM ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF NEVER UNDERESTIMATING THE SERIOUSNESS OF A RUSSIAN THREAT. AS THE SENATOR'S STATE LAY ONLY 90 MILES FROM CUBA, HE SPOKE WITH SOMETHING ABOUT WHICH HE HAD ALMOST PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE. HIS OWN VOTING RECORD ON SUCH ISSUES IN CONGRESS WAS OPEN TO INSPECTION, AND HE WAS SURE IT WOULD BE FAVORABLY REGARDED BY THE KING.

10. KING KHALID ASKED WHICH COUNTRIES THE SENATOR HAD VISITED AND WAS PLANNING TO VISIT ON HIS MIDDLE EASTERN TOUR. NEXT, HE ASKED WHETHER THE SENATOR HAD MET WITH THE FUTURE LEADERSHIP OF ISRAEL. THE SENATOR REPLIED THAT HE HAD HAD EXTENSIVE MEETINGS WITH ALL OF THEM, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY. ON THE BASIS OF THESE DISCUSSIONS, HE WAS NO LONGER PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT A NEW ISRAELI GOVERNMENT -- UNDER MENAHEM BEGIN -- COULD BE A VALID INTERLOCUTOR WITH THE ARABS AS BOTH SIDES WORKED TOWARD PEACE. KING KHALID URGED THE UNITED STATES TO CONTINUE ITS PEACE EFFORTS. HE BELIEVED THAT IF THESE WERE CHECKED OR FAILED, THE USSR AND ITS ALLIES WOULD GAIN GREATLY IN THE REGION AND THE WORLD. THE SOONER SUCH A PEACE EFFORT WAS ACCOMPLISHED, THE BETTER, AND HIS MAJESTY HOPED THAT THIS AUSPICIOUS YEAR -- 1977 -- WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO PASS

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WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT OR DECISIVE RESULTS. THE SENATOR IN REPLY POINTED OUT THAT THE UNITED STATES COULD NOT IMPOSE A SETTLEMENT UNILATERALLY UPON THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL. HE SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS TO PROMOTE A PEACE SETTLEMENT, AND THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO GET UNDERWAY A PROCESS OF NEGOTIATIONS, DISCUSSIONS, AND ACCOMMODATION IN 1977, WHICH IN THE FUTURE MIGHT LEAD TO PEACE BETWEEN THE ARABS AND ISRAEL. THE KING PRAYED THAT THIS MIGHT BE SO.

11. MESSAGE CLEARED WITH SENATOR.
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